Tuesday's first-ever government and industry executive panel included (left to right) moderator Dr. Jim Kane, president and CEO of Systems and Software Consortium; Sean Bond, vice president and general manager of Aerospace Controls BAE SYSTEMS Electronics and Integrated Solutions; Terry Jaggers, Secretary of the Air Force/AQR; Hal Wilson, senior director and chief engineer, Northrup Grumman Mission Systems Defense Mission Systems Division; Carl R. Siel, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Chief Engineer; Mark D. Schaeffer, acting director, defense systems director, systems engineering OUSD (AT&L); and Dr. Art Pyster, senior vice president and director of systems engineering and integration, SAIC.

Transforming: Business, Security, Warfighting
Themed the 2006 Systems and Software Technology Conference

Defense leaders and industry professionals gathered in Salt Lake City from May 1-4 at the annual Systems and Software Technology Conference (SSTC) to share and improve methods of transformation throughout the U.S. military. From the floor of the diverse trade show to the podiums of the general sessions and expert presentations, the goal of the conference to contribute to the enhancement of the attendees' professional skills and knowledge of systems and software technologies delivered insights into the value of transformation in business, security, and warfighting.
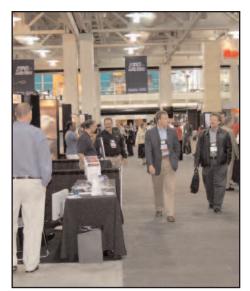
The SSTC offered professionals and attendees the opportunity to engage in conversation with the aim to improve and implement the newest best practices in the areas of software technology and military advancement by creating an environment of open discussion at the speaker luncheons, plenary sessions, and exhibitor tracks.

Participants gleaned valuable information and lessons learned from more than 175 presentations and tutorials offered in seven concurrent tracks, including agile development, architecture, future technologies, information assurance, information technologies, project management, and net-centricity. SSTC attendee Paul E. McMahon found that the conference helped improve his productivity:

Over the past few weeks, I have started a number of times to write a new CROSSTALK article, but got stuck because I wasn't sure what I was going to say. During SSTC, after I gave my presentation on Monday, a number of people stopped me and asked good questions about agile, which caused further thoughts and more notes in my pocket. On Wednesday, I listened to James Sutton speak and he made

one particular point that caused the wheels to turn faster. At the CROSSTALK author luncheon, I had an interesting discussion with Doug Parsons, which continued the next morning at his presentation on combining traditional and agile development. And then, Judy Bamberger, in the second to last presentation of the conference, hit the final point I needed. I literally wrote a complete article flying home on Friday. My reason in relaying this story is the following: Sometimes we think we are too busy to go to a conference or write an article or review someone else's material. But the reason I keep coming to SSTC and the reason I keep writing articles for CROSSTALK is because it always ends up making my workload easier rather than harder. The information I acquire by listening to others, reading their work, and discussing real situations during the SSTC has helped me solve some dilemmas I have been facing with a current client. So, on top of everything else, I am actually ahead of schedule! I wish that more people understood that the secret to productivity is going to SSTC.

The SSTC, co-sponsored by United States Army, United States Marine Corps, United States Navy, Department of the Navy, United States Air Force, Defense Information Systems Agency, and Utah State University, brings together experts from academia, industry, and the Department of Defense. This coalition of knowledge opens doors to future software technology endeavors by providing productive networking opportunities from the opening to the closing session.

The trade show offered SSTC attendees a chance to see the latest systems-related technologies.

Grady Booch, a recipient of the Stevens Lifetime Achievement Award, addresses the conference opening general session.

"... the reason I keep coming back to SSTC ... is because it always ends up making my workload easier rather than harder. The information I acquired by listening to others, reading their good work, and discussing real situations ... has also helped me solve some dilemmas I have been facing with a current client."

— Paul E. McMahon
SSTC attendee
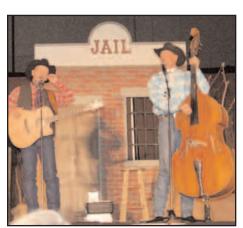
Photography by Bill Orndorff

Gen. Bruce Carlson, U.S. Air Force Materiel Command, and Capt. Paula Ross greet Utah State University President Stan Albrecht.

Impromptu side meetings like this one were a common sight between sessions.

SSTC attendees enjoyed the lighthearted comedy of the Bar J Wranglers performance during Wednesday evening's entertainment, which also included a chuckwagon dinner.

SSTC attendees take a break in between one of many tracks at the Salt Palace Convention Center.